



**ACT**  
Government

Canberra Nara

# Sister Cities



# Canberra and Nara are **Sister Cities**

Following almost 20 years of regular contact, the official signing of the proclamation of a Canberra Nara Sister City relationship occurred in Nara on October 26, 1993.

The links between our two cities were initiated by private citizens and the business community. Governments of the ACT and Nara City continue to foster and encourage our city to city friendship. Today, we have a vibrant relationship with regular and increasing links between schools, cultural and sporting organisations, Rotary clubs, professional associations, businesses, and Governments. The strength of the friendship was never more evident than in 2003, when the people of Nara contributed generously to Canberra's post bushfire appeal.

# Arts, Culture and Society

Nara and Canberra are rich in culture, heritage, and contemporary arts. Nara prides itself on the finest samples of arts and architecture that reach back 1300 years to when it was Japan's capital. A testament to its uniqueness is the inclusion of eight sites on the UNESCO world heritage list: the temples Todaiji, Kofuku-ji, Gango-ji, Yakushi-ji, Toshodai-ji, the Kasuga Grand Shrine, Kasuga-yama Hill Primeval Forest, and the Heijo Palace Site. Closely related to these sites are Nara's traditional festivals, forming an important part of the cultural calendar.

Nara is famous for traditional arts and crafts, including linen textiles, calligraphy, traditional painting, ceramics, sculpture and the production of exquisite inks and brushes.

Canberra has a lively art scene with studios, workshops, exhibition spaces, theatres, galleries, and museums showcasing Australia's multicultural fabric. Sister City cultural exchanges include exhibitions, bands and choirs, and children's art.

Canberra Nara Peace Park has been developed on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin to symbolise the friendship between our cities. The Park provides a perfect setting for the two stone lanterns and a memorial stone gifted to Canberra from the citizens of Nara. The "Toku" (virtue) sculpture by Shinki Kato commemorates our sister city relationship. The name of the sculpture, "Toku," signifies a prayer for eternal peace between the two countries. The shape of the sculpture was inspired by Horyu-ji temple, which was rebuilt 1,300 years ago by Prince Shotoku.

Canberra Nara Peace Park hosts the annual Canberra Nara Candle Festival held in October. The Festival boasts a display of thousands of elegant candles and entertainment, food and cultural activities to celebrate the Sister City relationship.

Nara Grove, a stand of Australian trees and shrubs, is situated on Black Mountain Peninsula across the lake from Canberra Nara Peace Park and commemorates visits of Nara delegations to Canberra.

# Tourism

Canberra and Nara are both popular tourist destinations. Canberra as the modern, young national capital of Australia and Nara as the ancient capital of Japan.



## Major attractions in Canberra:

---

Canberra Nara Peace Park

---

Canberra Nara Candle Festival

---

National Multicultural Festival

---

Australian National Botanic Gardens

---

National Science and Technology Centre (Questacon)

---

National Gallery of Australia

---

National Portrait Gallery

---

National Museum of Australia

---

National Capital Exhibition

---

Telstra Tower

---

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

---

Floriade

---

Parliament House

---

Australian War Memorial

---

Old Parliament House

For more information on tourism in Canberra, please see the **Visit Canberra** and **Events ACT** websites.





Canberra is now rated as one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in Australia. Nara attracts millions of visitors each year.



Above: Canberra Nara Candle Festival.

Below: Gate at Canberra Nara Peace Park.



# Tourism

## Major attractions in Nara:

Eight World Heritage listed  
cultural assets

Nara Prefectural Museum

Shoso-in Treasure Repository

Nara Tokae Festival

Nara-Machi historic village

Isuien Garden

Nara National Museum

Nara City Museum  
of Photography

In addition to these, Nara has many beautiful parks and gardens including Nara Park, famous for its deer. For more information on tourism in Nara, please see the **Visit Nara** tourism website.

# Business

Canberra is a city of the future, excelling in smart, clean, technology-based industries that take advantage of the national capital's access to research and development institutions, world class communications infrastructure, and a highly educated workforce.

Nara's main industry revolves around tourism. Nara enjoys a large inflow of domestic and international tourists, who help to support the thriving, traditional craft industries, and sake production. Nara is also committed to preserving its natural environment.

Ukimido  
in Nara City.





Left: Pergola and stone lantern at Canberra Nara Peace Park.

# Education

Since the early days of the Canberra Nara Sister City relationship, one of the strongest links has been through regular educational exchanges. There are now many ‘twinned’ Canberra and Nara schools, with teachers and students previously benefiting from international teacher exchange programs with Nara.

Nara University High School students visit Canberra regularly and enjoy performing at the annual Canberra Nara Candle Festival. The Instrumental Music Program (IMP) for ACT Government schools enjoys a long-term relationship with the Ichijo Senior High School band program.







Above: Nara's famous deer in autumn.

# Sport

Sport has an important place in the ongoing relationship between Canberra and Nara with football, softball, martial arts, and basketball playing major roles.



Above: Former Imperial Audience Hall.  
Below: Nara's famous deer in summer.





Canberra  
Nara

# Sister Cities

Canberra Nara

## Sister City Committee

The Canberra Nara Sister City Committee was formed to continue the process of facilitating contact and friendship in all areas, suggesting and initiating new projects and advising the ACT Government on ways to effectively support contacts between the two communities.

The Canberra community can play a part through the 'Friends of Nara' network, open to any person interested in promoting international friendship through the Canberra Nara Sister City relationship.

The Canberra Rotary Club are also involved in the Sister City relationship and facilitate events utilising the Canberra Rotary Peace Bell near Canberra Nara Peace Park.

To register your interest in promoting the Canberra Nara Sister City relationship, email [CIE@act.gov.au](mailto:CIE@act.gov.au).

### Contact us:

Canberra Nara Sister City secretariat  
Office of International Engagement  
GPO Box 158  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Telephone: +61 2 6207 8976

